[P. 375, B]

RITUAL ACTIVITIES

843
[845]

A pregnant woman was not permitted to eat eggs with double yolks, or double fruit, lest she have twins. No special action was taken if twins were born, however.

846
827
826

During her confinement a woman was not supposed to rub the sweat from her face. She might dab the sweat off, but to rub it would cause her to be wrinkled in her old age. One informant assured me that this was the truth and pointed to her own relatively unwrinkled face as proof.

852

When a child loses a milk tooth, it is taken up and thrown into the brush. At that time an admonition is shouted to "some little animal with sharp teeth," that it should exchange the milk tooth for a good permanent one (2295a-2301)

PUBERTY: GIRLS
(2305-2352)

881
[178]

Aside from the "big times" which will be described later, the girls' puberty dance was the most important ceremonial gathering among the Washo. This custom has survived with tenacity and it is still considered a matter of real concern if for some reason a girl does not have "her dance."

Although much of the activity at a girls' dance is clearly social throughout the occasion, there is a series of ritual actions which must be carried out. The following account is an idealized version of the "old way." Other accounts will describe variations which have developed in the past years.

881
114
[178]

Certain statements which I make will appear to be at variance with Stewart's Culture Element Distribution Lists. However, I am inclined to think that the absence of traits in the memory of my own informants represents a pattern of change rather than inaccuracies on the part of earlier investigators. With minor exceptions, differences between statements made today and Stewart's lists take the form of traits marked present in the lists which are unknown to my own informants. Moreover, most of these differences are to be found in the hair-combing and scratching complex and suggest that the taboos on hair combing were abandoned some time between the childhood of his informants, who were in their seventies in 1936, and that of my own informants, who are in their seventies today (1959).

[302]
[784]
[182]

The parents of my informants must not have known or not enforced combing taboos, while the parents of Stewart's informants must have considered them proper and so instructed their children. We can speculate, on this basis, that the taboo on hair combing and scratching was abandoned by the Washo some time in the first half of the century. Whether this can be credited to the influence of the white man or to a continuing pattern of change is a matter for further investigation.

302
784
178
881
[177]

The account of the entire puberty complex which follows was given to me by a seventy-five-year-old Washo woman who is generally consulted whenever a family plans to hold the girls' dance.

881
[115]

"When a girl is about ten she is told what is going to happen to her. When her first period comes [she is not specially confined] people tell her to be

"Individual Peyotists accuse one another of causing sickness or death under guidance of malicious spirits, or of secretly making use of Peyotist ritual, song, and medicine as a screen for acquiring personal advantage in 'the old way.' . . . Deaths of members or too-frequent failure to cure result in suspicion and the eventual rejection of a leader."

Again, Peyote singers carried on a rivalry with one another which "seems to be one means by which hostility is expressed among Peyotists" (Merriam and d'Azevedo, 1957, 625).

Peyotism, however, had failed to take hold, in Dresslerville at least, by the time of our field study. The members of this community did not appear to have had sufficient time to work out effective means for redirecting their aggressions in a socially acceptable manner.

Instead the aggression was internalized, the very thing that canalization is believed able to avoid.[2] This internalization was evident in certain self-destructive activities, though in each case the evidence was questionable and may be accepted only with qualification. Such evidence includes the high incidence of heavy drinking, though a comparative measure with the 1930's was lacking; the increasing harshness of the socialization process, though "taking it out" on one's children as an indication of internalized aggression is open to question; and a decreasing interest in tribal affairs, which could be interpreted as a lack of concern by the Washo about themselves and their future. The fact that many young men had left the community may also be an indication of internal conflicts that they were unable to resolve in any satisfactory manner. Suicide, of course, would have been a clear measure of such a conclusion, but, again, records were not available for comparison between the 1930's and the time of our study.

We can thus tentatively conclude, given the nature of our evidence, that Nadel's suggestion, that witchcraft beliefs impede the integration of a society and add to the stress of social life, does not appear to hold true for the Washo case.

In this paper, the cultural changes that took place among the Washo over a 15-year period were used to support the contention that witchcraft beliefs may fulfill a positive function in displacing aggressions. Support for this conclusion was drawn from the consequences of the elimination of "bad" shamans. We also attempted to demonstrate how education may be considered as an intervening variable between frustrations and the socially acceptable means for releasing aggressions. The significance of cultural transmission from one generation to the next has always been implicit in any

[2] [footnote appears on p. 66 -- Analyst]

147
shown that increasing age is associated with increasing percentages of hypertension, the correlation of younger age with white schooling would tend to blur real blood pressure differences between the groups with different educational experiences. To put it another way, the finding that Washo students from white schools had more hypertension than others occurred despite the fact that these were younger Washo, whom we would normally expect to have lower pressures.

158
121

Discussion

158
The long standing hypothesis that stress is associated with hypertension, possibly figuring in its etiology, is supported by the data in the present study. The fact that Washo blood pressure levels are high either when compared to acceptable normal limits, or to mean levels of other societies throughout the world (for a discussion of comparisons of mean blood pressure levels of the Washo with those of a number of other groups, see Scotch, 1957, 42, 93) may be attributed under this hypothesis to the stresses to which the Washo are subject. Chief among these are poverty and the discrimination the Washo face as an extremely small minority group within the dominant white culture of Nevada. Furthermore, gainful employment is extremely difficult to get, first, because there are so few jobs available in Nevada that do not involve gambling enterprises and, secondly, because of discrimination. Further, attempts by the Bureau of Indian Affairs to alleviate the economic situation by such schemes as the relocation plan had met with complete rejection at the time of the study. To our knowledge, not a single Washo had agreed to be relocated despite the many attractive features of the plan. When Washo were interviewed concerning their reluctance to relocate, their typical attitude might be expressed:

147
[735]
[648]
[464]
158
648
735
147

> "Things are bad enough here where we only have to associate with whites for limited periods of time, but at least we continue to live within the tribe. We maintain many of our customs, and we know and understand our neighbors. But if we agreed to move to a new city we would be torn from our land and tribe and we would have to compete with whites on the whites' home grounds. It is better to suffer from poverty in a situation we are familiar with than to take a chance to make a decent living but live in an unfamiliar situation."

With this kind of attitude is associated a rather pessimistic world view. [829]